

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A categorized speech-based interface, comprising a prompt delivery system for delivering user prompts to users, each user prompts comprising at least one of a full prompt and a tapered prompt, said interface further comprising logic for determining the quantity of at least one of correct and incorrect responses to said user prompts, said prompt delivery system delivering tapered prompts in response to the determination of a quantity of said at least one of correct and incorrect responses.

2. The categorized speech interface of claim 1, wherein said prompt delivery system delivers tapered prompts in response to correct responses to a prerequisite number of full prompts.

3. The categorized speech-based interface of claim 2, wherein said prompt delivery system delivers tapered prompts to said user until said user provides an incorrect response.

4. The categorized speech-based interface of claim 3, wherein said prompt delivery system delivers full prompts following an incorrect response until a subsequent prerequisite number of correct responses are provided by a user.

5. The categorized speech-based interface of claim 2, wherein said prerequisite number of correct responses to full prompts is increased if an incorrect response is received.

1           6.     The categorized speech-based interface of claim 5, wherein said  
2 prerequisite number of responses to full prompts is increased for each sequential  
3 incorrect response that is received.

1           7.     The categorized speech-based interface of claim 1, wherein said incorrect  
2 responses include at least one selected from the group consisting of out-of-grammar  
3 responses, silence time outs, and help responses.

1           8.     The categorized speech-based interface of claim 1, wherein said prompt  
2 delivery system delivers tapered prompts in response to a determination that correct  
3 responses have been provided by a user to a minimum prerequisite proportion of said  
4 prompts.

1           9.     The categorized speech-based interface of claim 1, wherein said interface  
2 is segmented, and said prompt delivery system delivers tapered prompts in a segment  
3 in response to a determination that correct responses have been provided by a user to  
4 a prerequisite quantity of said prompts while in said segment.

1           10.    The categorized speech-based interface of claim 9, wherein said  
2 prerequisite quantity of correct responses comprises a prerequisite number of  
3 sequential correct responses provided by the user while in said segment.

1           11.    The categorized speech-based interface of claim 9, wherein said  
2 prerequisite quantity of correct responses comprises a prerequisite minimum proportion  
3 of correct responses provided by the user while in said segment.

12. A method for providing a categorized speech-based interface, comprising the steps of:

delivering user prompts to users, said prompts comprising at least full prompts and tapered prompts;

determining the quantity of at least one of correct and incorrect responses to said prompts;

delivering tapered prompts in response to the determination of a quantity of  $f$  at least one of said correct or incorrect responses.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein tapered prompts are delivered in response to determining that correct responses have been provided by a user to a prerequisite number of full prompts.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein tapered prompts are delivered when a prerequisite number of correct responses to full prompts are received.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein tapered prompts are delivered to said user until said user provides an incorrect response.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein full prompts are delivered following an incorrect response until a prerequisite number of correct responses are provided by a user.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein said prerequisite number of correct responses to full prompts is increased if an incorrect response is received.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said prerequisite number of responses to full prompts is increased for each sequential incorrect response that is received.

1 19. The method of claim 12, wherein said incorrect responses include at least  
2 one selected from the group consisting of out-of-grammar responses, silence time outs,  
3 and help responses.

1 20. The method of claim 12, wherein tapered prompts are delivered in  
2 response to determining that correct responses have been provided by a user to a  
3 minimum prerequisite proportion of said prompts.

1 21. The method of claim 12, wherein said interface is segmented, and  
2 tapered prompts are delivered in a segment in response to determining that correct  
3 responses have been provided by a user to a prerequisite quantity of said prompts  
4 while in said segment.

1 22. The method of claim 21, wherein said prerequisite quantity of correct  
2 responses comprises a prerequisite number of sequential correct responses provided  
3 by the user while in said segment.

1 23. The method of claim 21, wherein said prerequisite quantity of correct  
2 responses comprises a prerequisite minimum proportion of correct responses provided  
3 by the user while in said segment.